

Speak up & be heard

President Nixon has said that "the buyer has the right to register his dissatisfaction and have his complaint heard and weighed when his interests are badly served." Some of the proposals before Federal departments & agencies offer opportunities for consumers to make their views known. You may want to testify or submit written comments. In writing comments, give your name & address, state the name and *Federal Register* citation of the proposal on which you are commenting and explain your views briefly & clearly.

Snowmobiles, minibikes, dune buggies

President Nixon has issued an executive order requiring four Federal agencies to regulate the use of snowmobiles, minibikes, motorcycles, trail bikes, dune buggies & all-terrain vehicles on public lands. The President issued the order because of concern that widespread use of such off-road vehicles can damage soil, vegetation & wildlife and can interfere with other recreation on public lands.

Agriculture, Defense and Interior departments and Tennessee Valley Authority are to issue regulations to govern the use of off-road vehicles on lands within their respective jurisdictions. They are to designate certain trails for the use of off-road vehicles and also designate areas where the vehicles will be banned. The regulations are due July 9.

For details, see *Federal Register*: Feb. 9, page 2877.

Door-to-door sales

March 20 is the deadline for comments on the Federal Trade Commission's new proposal governing door-to-door sales.

The chief feature of the proposed rules provides for a "cooling-off" period of 3 days. During that time, persons who buy from door-to-door salesmen would be allowed to change their minds and return the goods without obligation. The current proposal is a substitute for the original proposal, which FTC issued in September 1970. The following are major features of the new proposal:

—The regulations will apply to sales of \$25 or more. The original proposal would have applied to sales of \$10 or more.

—The new proposal no longer contains the "door-opener" provision, which was aimed at curbing the peddler who tries to get his foot in the door by posing as a poll-taker or contest entrant. The door-opener provision would have required salesmen to explain that they were salesmen when they first contacted a buyer. FTC officials say they are still studying door-opener rules.

—Under the new proposal, the buyer who wishes to cancel a sale must send a written notice by mail or telegram or deliver it himself to the seller's business address. The original proposal allowed a buyer to cancel by telephoning the seller or by informing the seller in person.

—A provision requiring the seller to furnish the buyer with a copy of the contract has been added.

—Another new provision requires the seller to provide

the buyer with a notice of cancellation that tells the date of the sale, the deadline for cancellation and the name & address of the seller. The buyer fills in this notice in order to cancel the sale.

—Under the new proposal, both the cancellation notice and the contract must be in the same language as that used by the salesman when he made the sale.

For details, see *Federal Register*, Feb. 17, page 3551. Send comments to the Assistant Director for Rules & Guides, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C. 20580.

Beverage preservative

April 10 is the deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to ban a chemical preservative used in some wines, beers, and noncarbonated soft drinks.

The chemical diethyl pyrocarbonate (DEPC), is suspected of producing a cancer-causing substance. In 1963, FDA approved the use of DEPC in noncarbonated wines; in 1967, it was approved for beer; in 1968, for noncarbonated soft drinks and some fruit beverages. DEPC is used to inhibit fermentation.

Recent evidence indicates that DEPC can combine with ammonia in beverages to produce urethane, a cancer-causing chemical. It has not yet been proven that urethane is produced in any product being sold.

For details, see *Federal Register*: Feb. 11, page 3060. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Asbestos cloth

April 18 is the deadline for comments on a Food & Drug Administration proposal to ban clothing made from fabric which contains asbestos. The proposal would not apply to clothing made to be worn in firefighting.

Studies have shown that inhalation of asbestos fibers may cause various lung diseases including cancer. In late 1970, a fabric containing 8% asbestos fibers was imported from Italy and used to manufacture some 600,000 women's coats, which were marketed in 1971.

For details, see *Federal Register*, Feb. 18, page 3645. Send comments to the Hearing Clerk, Department of Health, Education & Welfare, Room 6-88, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Cosmetics & medicines on planes

May 3 is the deadline for comments on a Federal Aviation Administration proposal to allow passengers to carry cosmetics and medicines on airplanes even though the articles may be flammable or explosive. FAA's proposal would bring its regulations in line with common practice—many passengers already take aerosol cans of shaving cream, deodorant, hair spray, antiseptic spray, and other dangerous products on board.

Under present regulations, a passenger violates FAA rules if he takes on a plane anything that contains compressed gases (such as products in aerosol cans) or flammable liquids (such as perfume, other cosmetics and some medicines that contain alcohol). To obey the rules, each passenger has to put such articles in special packages and label them as dangerous.

The proposed regulation would allow passengers to carry such cosmetics and medicines in quantities of 10 ounces or less without having to comply with special packing and labeling procedures.

For details, see *Federal Register*: Feb. 3, page 2587. Send comments in duplicate to Office of General Counsel, Attention Rules Docket, Federal Aviation Administration, Washington, D.C. 20591.

Lead in gasoline

May 23 is the deadline for comments on an Environmental Protection Agency proposal to reduce the amount of lead in gasoline.

Under the proposal, service stations, which make about 65% of all gasoline sales, would be required to offer a "lead-free," "phosphorus-free" grade of gasoline beginning July 1, 1974. Under the regulations lead-free gasoline could contain no more than 0.05 grams of lead per gallon; phosphorus-free gasolines would be limited to 0.01 grams of phosphorus per gallon.

The EPA proposal also calls for a reduction of lead in regular and premium gasolines. Regular gasolines now contain about 2.2 grams of lead per gallon; premiums contain about 2.7 grams. Effective Jan. 1, 1974, both these grades would be reduced to two grams of lead per gallon. Lead content would be reduced to 1.7 grams per gallon after Jan. 1, 1975; 1.5 grams per gallon after Jan. 1, 1976; and 1.25 grams per gallons after Jan. 1, 1977.

In part, the proposal was designed to protect the public health. High lead levels in the air are associated with a number of respiratory and other diseases. Cars and trucks are usually the chief sources of airborne lead.

The proposal was also made because near lead-free gas is essential for proper functioning of catalytic converters, the devices that certain major auto manufacturers are developing to use on their 1975-model cars to meet exhaust-emission requirements of the Clean Air Act. So that new cars with catalytic converters will use the lead-

free gasoline, the regulations would require that they be designed so that only the nozzles from lead-free gas pumps will fit their gas tank inlets.

At present, lead is added to gasoline because it is an inexpensive way to increase the gasoline's octane rating. Octane ratings measure a gasoline's antiknock ability. Regular gasolines have research-octane ratings of about 94; premiums may be 100 or more. Since 1971, cars have been designed to operate on lower octane fuels. Phosphorus may be added to gasolines to counteract excessive accumulation of lead deposits that can also cause improper combustion of the engine's fuel.

It is anticipated that the EPA regulations would result in a 60 to 65% reduction in lead emissions from cars and trucks by mid-1977. However, the new gasoline is expected to cost more. By 1980, it will probably be between 1 and 2 cents per gallon more expensive.

For details, see *Federal Register*, Feb. 23, page 3882. Send comments in triplicate to the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Air Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 17-59, Rockville, Md. 20852.

Earthenware

The Tariff Commission, in a report to President Nixon, has recommended an increase of approximately 90% in the duties on certain earthenware imports.

The commission decided that U.S. manufacturers producing earthen table and kitchen articles are being seriously injured by increased imports resulting from a 1968 trade agreement, which reduced the duties on earthenware. The proposed increases would re-establish the duties in effect for earthenware in 1967. It is anticipated that the proposed increased duties would discourage inexpensive earthenware imports. This would decrease the competition that the comparatively inexpensive imports give to U.S. manufacturers.

The imported articles that would be affected by the proposed duty increase include almost all earthen dinnerware and almost all earthen & china articles not used as dinnerware:

- Earthen dinnerware that retails \$25 to \$50 for a 45-piece set;
- Earthen mugs;
- Other earthen articles except those with a very high value;
- China mugs;
- Other china of low and medium value not used as dinnerware.

The President is expected to take action on the commission's report within 60 days. If the President accepts the commission's findings, he could schedule the proposed rate increases.

For details, see the *Federal Register*, Feb. 26, page 4125.

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